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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE, EUR/CARC

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [CY](#) [RU](#) [GE](#)
SUBJECT: CYPRUS WORRIED BY RUSSIA'S RECENT RECOGNITION OF
[1](#)S. OSSETIA/ ABKHAZIA

REF: A. SECSTATE 91894
[1](#)B. NICOSIA 668
[1](#)C. NICOSIA 660

Classified By: Ambassador Frank Urbancic, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Per Ref A, the Ambassador, in his August 28 introductory call on Cypriot MFA Permanent Secretary (D-equivalent) Nicholas Emiliou, condemned Russia's recent aggression in the Caucasus and August 26 recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Further, he raised Washington's hope that Cyprus adopt a stronger tone vis-a-vis Moscow's bellicosity, both in its bilateral dealings and within European Union, United Nations, OSCE and other multilateral institutions' deliberations. The U.S. was not demanding that Cyprus take extreme steps like breaking relations, the Ambassador clarified. But the international community could not allow Russia's actions go without comment, lest they have a deleterious effect on the wider, already-tenuous situation in the region.

[1](#)2. (C) Emiliou responded that Cyprus was gravely concerned over the latest developments in Georgia and Russia's recognition of the two breakaway regions, especially given the political situation in Cyprus. The GOC was committed to territorial integrity, and he cited FM Kyprianou's August 26 and 28 public statements that focused on this principle, as well as recent messages from Brussels, as proof. Emiliou assured the Ambassador that Nicosia would not remain silent, especially since there were vital principles at stake. Unfortunately, Kosovo had served as a "precursor" to Ossetia and Abkhazia, he asserted, and given the Russians a concrete argument for their actions. Regarding the future of Moscow's relations with Nicosia, Emiliou argued that Russia was an important partner in many respects, and that it was vital the GOC maintain a level of political engagement. The Ambassador rejected the Kosovo comparison out-of-hand, noting the international community's long involvement there and its numerous, earnest efforts to reach a mutually-agreeable political solution. Emiliou had made up his mind, however, and replied flatly that "we must agree to disagree."

[1](#)3. (C) Comment: Refs B and C outline Cyprus's rock/hard place dilemma over Georgia, torn between supporting territorial integrity -- in Cyprus's case, an existential issue -- and backing its old friends in Moscow. Its heartburn increased after Russia's August 26 recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which Cypriot MFA officials claim came as a total surprise, despite the Russians' near-daily (of late) presence at the Ministry. Moscow's latest move could induce even the GOC to alter its stand slightly, perhaps under cover of EU deliberations such as the September 1 special session of the European Council. Emiliou's stony discussion of the subject did not give us much hope, however, that Cyprus will criticize Russia openly or do much more than offer platitudes about the principle of Georgia's territorial

